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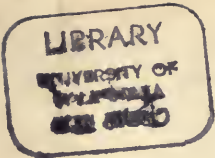


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EXPLORATIONS

ROBERT McALMON

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EXPLORATIONS

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BY
ROBERT L McALMON

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EXPLORATIONS

SURF OF THE DEAD SEA

THE VIA DOLOROSA OF ART

WHITE MALES

WHITE stallions dashed by.
I could see their teeth gleaming
Through their lips as they sneered
With death-laughter upon them.
Light poured in silver
Off their arched necks.
But there was blood upon their flanks,
Scarlet trickling upon the white sinews.
The stallions were prancing to death,
Trumpeting defiance with their nostrils.

White Chillingham bulls followed them.
I saw them gore the stallions,
But a wince of pain was across their eyes too.
Sharp horse-hoofs had struck them on the heart.
They fought with missing heart-beats
To plow on, tearing the soil with polished hoofs.

If they could only reach the forest,
If only to die there !
I could not help them.

I remembered dreams I had had
In which white mastodons trampled the plains,

Seeking to reach the forest before death.
And white Irish stags, ten men high,
With antlers that were giant trees with white bark,
Had stumbled under the weight of their own bulk.
A wince was across all their eyes—
But a smile, a never-mind tenderness.
Perhaps they were sure of coming into the purity
Because of their whiteness.

I knew why they were white :
They were dreams—all frozen,
And all white with the frost upon them,
And white with the frost all through them.
They were frozen thwarted male things
Rushing somewhere—
Seeking, fighting, and killing ;
But white—say that of them.
The steam off their quivering flanks,
Sweated and weak with exhaustion, was white.
They would never find mates
Before they died.
There would be no more white males,
None so clear a white as these ;
Only some tinged with gray—dusty.
But I could not watch them rush to the forest forever—
Not one did I see arrive there—
A cloud or night or blackness always intervened.
I saw them rush forward and disappear,
And then saw no more of them.

TO-DAY'S MUSIC

His being started with decision,
Quick as a pair of highstrung horses given the rein,

When the orchestra's music danced
With his impalpable sensual images.
It was wine-steam to drunken him—
Heavy, rhythmic, plucked gold petals of music,
Floating with sonorous etherealism about him.

He could not wait when it had ceased :
More could be heard on other nights.
Out to walk with his head amongst the stars,
With the sky standing straight before him,
He went, breathing the poignant night, drugged,
Knowing the moon was a diadem for his head.
And the slow sensuous ecstasies
Of music that his mind could not quite catch . . .
Only he was living . . . music . . .
Many times he had thought how sufficient life would be
Could a man dance the motion he feels,
And sing the songs within him.
But when your limbs fail you . . .
When your voice will not ascend . . . ?
But to-night, he would make music,
Music that was virile and barbarous.

He could see electric threads of clipped blue
Dancing from positive to negative electric poles
In music.
He could hear color, movement, and noises.
He could see music that pictured the flow of generations
Into life—impetuous, rushing, gleaming with flesh and sun-
light and darkness.
The shriek of maddened prehistoric brutes was in his ears—
They were waging battle to death, wading in blood,
Fighting for the preservation of their species,

Deep in the tangled forest.

The dissonances of many insects rasping shrilly,
The silence for moments of murderous insect warfare—
He could hear music that was a history of sound
Since the world began.

. . . the lighted city streets ran ahead of him
Like slender gold lizards basking in the moonlight. . . .

So many years the moon, too well known,
Had irked him for being no exotic moon . . .

. . . to-night, he would compose music,
Free music, for the soul, the intellect—
Not honey in the listener's ear :

The dolorous drip of harps,
The sob of bass violins,
Catgut moaning mindless sorrow.

He would write music, something of sweetness too :
The pipes of goat-herds on Athenian hills ;
Slim girls chanting for religious ceremonies,
And dancing, love in their limbs where worship should be ;
The clash of knights' armor in tournament,
All coming to the climax of subways clamoring in tunnels.

And other sounds. . . .

Far-away train whistles, fog's-horn on the bay ;
Aliens singing their native songs,
Hunched in drab haunts of a metropolis ;
Chinese—discordant falsetto babblings,
Pale yellow notes descending in eighth tones. . . .
He would write music . . . there would be no more loneli-
ness

Of the soul for him. He would reach back through the
ages,
Reach forth to the future for companions of his spirit,

And his music would touch them as with understanding hands.

He was through with themes and composition :
Only kaleidoscopic resoundings, playing upon the nerves,
Awakening the instinct memory of people
With their jeering, gentle, maniacal, forgiving heterogeneity.

Negroes would run, quick blood in their hearts,
As progenitors in Africa had run centuries ago—
Savages in a religious dance shrieking fear
At some demon's wrath because storm and lightning
Have broken in upon their ceremonies ;
The bellowing of a rhinoceros bull as he rushed
To gore the huntsman whose arrow had wounded him ;
The trumpet of elephant herds stampeding, panic-stricken,
Through the forest, tearing aside small trees as they rush ;
The rumble of bison hoofs beating endlessly over plains
With Indians whooping in pursuit of them :

. . . He would write music such that one would hear
The rush of the stream of life—

Music of evolution . . .

The sibilant hiss of snakes fading into

The flap of reptilian bird-wings . . .

The satin swish of sea-species leaving the waters

To go forth upon the land, prospering as land-beast

Or going toward extinction . . . music just the same . . .

Washed scarlet tones, high, persistent and dissonant.

He needed such music for the rhythm of his blood,

Such music for the vehement dance restrained within him . . .

A mad, wild dance . . . limbs breaking, bones cracking,

A dance hurtling the sky, a life dance.

He would make music . . . yes, such, such music.

He intended to make music.

And he turned at the corner near his boarding-house.
The same cats were making love in the same way
As they had made love for the three dull months of summer.
The same pastry-shop stood in front of him . . .
. . . the same dark room, the same gas-light in its grayness
Awaited him. He would make music . . . music of tedium
too.

Yes, to-morrow, music . . . to-night—
He needed coffee and doughnuts, to sleep well—
And then . . . such music . . . to-morrow . . .

FORM DESTRUCTIONIST—SCULPTOR

Many moods—apathy tagged to the end of most—
Had gone into the carving of his masterpiece :
Lady with a three-cornered smile.
He grovelled when a critic spoke of his
“ Ironical incision, and sensitive cognition of inner essence.”
God !—he could not so facilely
Plumb for himself the dolorous enigma of his art.
Her obese countenance
Proclaimed his contempt for most of mankind—
At their best making an art of adaptation,
And at their worst . . .
Words signify nothing when silence is permissible.
Three times he had destroyed beginnings of his last work,
Fearing that they were not authentic expressions
Of impulses indigenous of his own contacts.
Given the alien substance of some trifling annoyance,
His nature could furnish nacre
For finer pearls of concept and of execution than these.
Some things of his, completed—
Minor things, not a discredit to him—but . . .

He shrugged an intellectual shoulder inwardly
When they were praised.
Certainly he knew
He'd caught the tigerish amative spirit
Of the over-pure in his *Satyre Religieux* ;
But its blazing orbs, lecherous with lust-light,
Treacherously savage with repression,
Were too flamboyant a repetition of satire well done before.
The plastic suavity of his *Enigmatic Nun*,
With a smile of invitation upon her saintly lips,
Gratified his sense of attainment but slightly.

“ Realism and truth be damned ! ” he was often heard to
say—

“ They are trite insistences.

What is the realism of a plasmic germ

Whose species we do not know ?—

Creation is the only reality.”

Phantasmagorical statues almost emerged

From the gray draperies of his subconsciousness

At moments of such proclamation.

Everything in the universe swirled

Or went through his mind in fluid conceptions.

“ There is no infinite—only our questions

Which are unreal until we answer them definitely ;

Only space which our minds do not fill with forms.

But it is not of the ego . . . it does not exist.

I am my universe. What I know, exists.

What I do not know is not ”—

He would say to his reflection in the mirror,

And it did not disconcert him with a refutation.

Whereupon impulses that were themselves masterpieces

Arose from the dormancy of his will.

He planned to put them into marble.
“Eternity is the metabolic process of the universal germ ;
The universe is an organism . . .
Species the corpuscles in its blood, its veins ;
My intellect is the skeleton of my universe ”—
He told portraits upon the wall of his room.
They acquiesced.
Some day through the sweep of his imagination
He would come upon form, transcended
Beyond the limitation of line and contour.

Meanwhile . . . He worked on lesser things, recalling :
The tiny spotted fawn he had found in the woods—
A hunter must have killed its mother,
For hunger had robbed it of instinctive terror.
An inquisitive baby snout had sought his face
As he carried it in his arms—
Moist nose, little hungry tongue licking,
Luminous trustful eyes . . .
Tenderly he recalled the tiny thing
Which of course died, too young to eat as he could feed it.
So beautiful, so sweetly pathetic an impulse
Was in him,
He put it into marble in the form of an oval,
With dim lines to subtly suggest many possibilities—
New life, love, destruction.
He would always disdain visual reproduction.

Tiny lizards, antelope-like in grace,
That he had watched for days out on the desert,
Certainly could not be caught in cold hard stone
By showing them in any fixed postures.
Their alert listening bodies, when they stopped
In running through lavender sage-weed,

He had memorized in marble
By slender oblongs that bent upward in a quick angle.
Only because the unique shape of sea-horses
Fascinated him had he copied their likeness.
Twining two stallion-necked, worm-headed beasts
With watch-spring bodies together, he felt gratified
Believing he had them as they made love
In the marine garden's tank.
Yet he was not sure that his tapering-based
Interrogation marks did not please his sense
Of the thing to be done with them in art the more.

And for these things to be called
"A symbolistic ironist!" He shuddered.
He trifling with that ephemeral quality—irony,
Doing a burlesque of the things that change!
"I have no religion but self—
Nothing I worship but my art,"
He told his quivering sensibilities to soothe them.
He knew there was lion passion in him
As well as lamb softness.
He would run the gamut of experience,
Then compress a year's living into a gesture, a line;
So that his passion of resistance,
His thwarted longings amidst loneliness,
His cleansing of soiled actualities,
Had permanent expression in symbols
Sufficiently withdrawn not to be subjected
To the misinterpretations of the multitude.
Music that sent him forth
To walk across Brooklyn Bridge,
His heart caught between the pricks
Of pointed melodies,

His breast cold in the salt wind,
His wrists singing with the pain of being,
This music—
Flutes—cold water ringing on thin glass,
Sombre violins droning bee-tragedies—
He would hold these tonalities into being
For a longer time than it takes silence to seep them in.
He would put music into white marble—
Marble that sang ;
And dancers—and colors—
These he would transform to marble too—
White marble—abstract of form.
But sensitive intuitions would recognize
The color, the motion, in them ;
Attuned ears would hear the music
Of his white marble—
Gray-green-violet, magenta-orange-blue-yellow
Moss, melody, movement,
Caught in white marble,
Caught in the whiteness of abstraction,
Worshipful beauty for spiritual intimacies.

But this morning he could not speak to himself in the mirror,
Morning was a pathologic time of Time for him.
From his window he saw that hills were green,
But he did not care to explore their greenness.
After all, green is a slavery—
Green trees, then red-yellow, white ;
Spring, summer, autumn, winter,
And after some years
Other trees come into the slavery of the same routine.
As for his sculpturing,
Well enough—

But what of his living ?—
Between sunrise and sunrise any life is held pendulating.
What if a few stars are stitched
In the hem of the garment one cannot throw off—
The sky one cannot look far into ?
What of his living—just to live ?
Life swirled past him in a flowing stream—
Ebb the tide, flow the current—
Wind of Time :
The only things existing the things in his mind,
And it a mind wild for freedom . . .
Wind-gust were dry leaves crackling,
Dust on his windowpanes.

He washed his teeth, and combed his hair ;
He tied a colored cravat in a freshly lined collar.
In the mirror his face was a morbid picture,
Rather appealing perhaps—
Sullen with youth . . . grave with despondence.
But there was breakfast to have—
The day was never his without his coffee.
So he thought of coffee :
In his mind the universe—thinking
Alone of coffee—sieved his self-perceptions.
Coffee—with not too much cream and sugar.

WORDS

One day long of words—
One year of words—
One eternity of words—
That splash, splutter and evaporate,
Flames lashing in the smoke,

And becoming themselves smoke,
They cut, corrode and heal.
Words !
This sentence damns one :
You go around like a windmill
And never get anywhere.

Where is where
And how does one get there,
And how is it proven that one is there
When one has arrived at somewhere ?

Words loom up gigantically.
They are cloud shadows and their loomings
Are less than ethereal, wasted evanescence.
Words cannot defile what is :
Words are never a lasting washover.

Let them billow up
And dash over me, taking me out to sea
In the tide of an undercurrent
Drownedly,
And toss me upon the beach rock-beaten
And weary ;
Then incarnate images
Of sullen, elusive loveliness.

Words fall heavier than rain,
But they are not rain.
The grass does not grow green because of them.
Their meanings are forgotten and they are lost.
Triteness annihilates them
As it annihilates men.

PROGRESS

Of progress little can be said
But that in experience each receding wave
Should bear away some prejudice—
The dust of age-old fears, desires and groping.

Whether we fall, or whether we rise,
And know not how to judge it, fall or rise,
Or make a lust of restraining lust
And cut ourselves to patterns we deem we must,
In the end we crumble.

Three weeks at sea a cocoon opens
To emit a butterfly that dries of birth moisture
To wet yellow-inscripted wings
In the mist about a tossing ship caught by a gale.

And so frailly perishes in the austere wind,
Luscious with beauty, that the waves ignore.

If only the waves were ascending waves,
Sweeping by, to cleanse and in somewise justify,
Not leaving so much to question, to explain, to rectify.

UNFINISHED TIDES

There is little ultimately to reverence—
Hence the annihilation of thrills—
Exaltation has gone to the same morgue
For cremation as superstition—
And I know I'm a liar to say either is dead,
But am affably pleased to favor you so.

I paint.

See, this "Structural design for eternity."
I never understand cosmic themes.
Consequently they are all that I paint.
Exploration into the subconscious
Inhibitions of infinity. To see with the eye
Is inanition of the will.
One can only seek to enlarge the vocabulary
Of the universe by insinuations upon its virtue—
With new forms that become conventionalized, and so—
Futile.

—These spectric-hued sperms,
Arched, spurting skyrocketly, wagging
Their tails in seas of new experience,
Symbolize my disdain for symbolism.

Black men against a black ground
Are the shape of the background,
Engineering and structural formula
Contrariwise or not.

A perfect white is made of all colours
And is no colour to speak about.

In the beginning it took seven—or is it six ?—
Days to create—what is created.
The days are going on far beyond seven.
Ask why, and construct answers
Highly sensitized to your own
Highly individualized vibrations.

Deduce white from black, and the answer
Is a nil that is potential of much
That we won't take time to reveal here.

So conventions reduce at last
Into the senility of the meaningless.

One sickens of the walled-in weakness of egotism—
With a soul—body and impulses uplifted—
Tinctured with spirituality—high-thinking sentimentality—
Well tinctured by intellect—even then butter
Does not always coagulate.

Canvas or paper !
And the chase is on in pursuit of form.
Who gives a damn if amateurish
Or reckless riders
Break hobby horses' legs and their own necks
On high fences ?

Use color, and line in some manner—
Not to paint pictures, but to explore
In the swamps of uncharted experience.
Breakfast eggs are of greater importance,
Relations considered, than the sublimity
Of first love—so I
Chose to paint antelopes loping.

APOTHEOSIS TO EXTINCTION

He much admired LaForgue
And Remy de Gourmont.
His admiration clung leechlike to him
Feeding upon his learned gestation
To reverence of exceeding avoirdupois.
I believe he "almost" sensed my meaning—
Indeed it was not intelligible to me,
More of protective intuition
In one insistent upon self-value—
When I remarked :
Any reverence is akin to superstition.

Insistent sublimations
Kept his mind swivelling
Upon erudite spiritualities.
The germs of hope for new moon-usages
Curdled with his pedant irritations,
But—what atrocities his intellect
Committed with its eternal rapes of his
Emotional chastities.
A libertine intellect, knowing
With the intimacies of countless
Literary unions—perhaps interruptus,
But the poor man did his best—
There were no sequestered spots
To which his dominating impulses
Would not force a husbandly entrance.
Therefore his impregnated desires
Pallored to a febrile birth
In the eternal abdomen of abysmal futility,
And clung to existence
Hovering despondently in the vicinity
Where those of divine malady are incarcerated.
He could write reviews of critiques at least.
His rancours fused with the misery accords
Of other men, thus vitalizing the species
Of his artificially refreshed morbidities.
Sharp protestation did not serve to
Make the surgical incision necessary to
Purge his moribund spirit of pus.
The palingenetic tendency of any realization
At least caused all emphasis of emphatic experience
To ebb into his protective doctrine of futilism,
Individualized à la—various authors—:
No man exactly expressing himself

Would be understood by anyone else :
Insistent yet his spirituality retrod
The circle path of inevitably repetitious convictions
Which just as inevitably perished within him.
Still he yielded no point to temperamental discovery,
But attempted by the intensification
Of his literary idolizations
To create for himself an *esthetic* raison d'être.
Only when he was no more capable of recognizing it so—
For sensitivities have a suture that closes to discovery
As surely as has any negroid brain—
Others of more vigorous restlessness,
Malcontents of object-subjectivity,
Completed his metamorphosis to extinction
By their indifferences.

AMERICANIQUE

An embroidered situation sewn
With borrowed ideation
—and pubescent unhappiness
Does not harden its subtleties of insight
To irony sufficiently adamant
To impale the pallid sky's vapor
Of industrial smoke—
—while spun into the tapestry beside
Swine guzzling cornfield ensilage,
En route to the stock yards
And the big Swedes, brothers to us^{all},
Who will make sausages of them,
Is the esoteric design
Of an ascetic non-esthetic, and—
Rather protesting—monastic line.

—derivitives accumulated, imported dyes,
Over which penchant readers sigh—
And the pens of subjugated culture-tortured men
Dip, seeking perhaps to brood here,
Enough to give a show of intense realization.
—The self-trickery of thought torturing
Insistent against ultra-insistence
Of mid-regional proclamation—
And Semitic despondency—or is it enthusiasm
Of morbidity
Mentalized to give the quality of search intellection ?
—O soft, sensuous and gorgeous, sogging
But without cosmopolite amalgam or emotional integrity.
Art, artico, artices, artiquet—
And what's in our arteries—
Here in the room an unsubiding gloom
Dominates my intricate intriguings
But forever confusing designs.

EVOCATION TO INTELLECTUALS

Cerebral excitants cease at last
To emanate from or dominate the cerebellum.
Paracletes summoned to evoke
Art emotion
Make cutaneous incisions
But the subjective cancer remains.
Dying, upon the wavery precipice
Of extinct cultures, sipping
With learned ceremonial
From recorded cognizances of travail
Cerebralic monstrosities drift atomlike

Somewhere between literary lunas
And disrupted council chambers of inner misery.
Dissect our cervical cords
To grant cessation of inutilizable informations.
Cereous images of culture
Melt quickly before the flame of our lusts.
Bathe us in the clear freshness of nothingness,
And the throb of our bodies' veins
Will spurt the spectric fluid
Of gangrened blood upon the converged precipitate
That our heads so contumaciously idolize.
Sacre bleu ! there is no Zodiacal path
In the illuminance of which one's feet must tread.
Gaze in the polished mirror
Upon your willowy nudeness
When moonlight through the leaded glass
Of Christ-befigured altar windows
Makes flickering blots of gleam.
Perhaps, despite the tedium of any view
Blasphemous—to whom since we have no religion ?
Fetid-erotic, or purple,
The acrobatic vermiculation
Of your unique soul in aggression
Will yet permit you to preside
Over that intensified space grown wan
With the ennui of your dis-respected presence.
And, juvenility of impulse with you,
Let you be sequestor of your egos
Exalted inhalations.—
Civilization needs perhaps be treated
With salvarsan—and you ?—
Who knows ?—iralgia
May have come from too intent gazing

Upon your own desires.—
But if phallic dreams and acts fail to penetrate
Maybe with weeping, cerebral tears of course,
Stalactite crystals will erect themselves
To a hardness that survives, and
In reflection, procreates. But why ?
Some visions have clotted the arteries
In their fresh sanguiniferous flow.
We are at best ventriloquists
Speaking for mute yearnings possessed of ironical wisdom
Kabalistic impalpabilities form a clarity
Outside of lugubrious loyalties to learning.
But come. We will walk erect, super-conscious
Of our frozen contempts and indifferences.

ADOLESCENCISMA

How subtly alchemized this adolescent unrest,
Seething, restrained by intellect to irony.

Knowledge—Mon Dieu—there is so much knowledge
And so little wisdom one may have,
From many a printed page sublimely written
Encouragement—indeed—so much encouragement
One may have given by many a metaphysician
Or profoundly well-read litterateur.
Surely the rebellious cerebrations
Of young minds should storm their way through books
And pierce the omnipotent vapors of moods
So beautifully discovered within them
To—at last—a region of clear judgments.

Books—books—books—and books—
Resistive, insistent, battling desires

Befuddling, befogging, dulling their keenness
In the whimsical, tragic, satirical
Compression of anguish and humours in books.

Young men charging the arena mounted
On that fiery steed adolescent unhappiness ;
Young men bearing the shining sword of mad rebellion
With wit a scintillating shield before them ;
Young men rushing dauntlessly to the conquest of information.

Young men entering the field of middle age
Still bearing bravely the leech-clinging burden of information.

Young men ! Perhaps the dust you are blowing
Of some medieval classic is the dust of its author
Come home to rest and feel again the pulse of unrest
That made it be.

Young men ! The way through books is dark, dank, and
tanglesome.

It is a forest of many glades where fat fruits grow,
Glades where one may rest and sup—and, having supped,
Remain to sup again—till the eyes grow bleared,
And you are lost, and hidden completely by the leaves of
the forest trees.

INFINITY RATIONALIZED

Area, a pale opacity
Asceticized into estheticism
By the austerity of suppressions
We have never been consulted on.

And colors went their way singing.
Movements marked off the clarity

With contortionistic girulations
Which established deified
But immeasurably confusing relations.

Orchestrate my impulses.
Let the silent vastness even unto
Days seventy times seventy repetitiously multiplied
Gulp me into their expansion,
And ooze about me gushingly
With the suave oppressions
Of sound, color and eternal movement.
I have irrepressible unexpressable energy.

I am weary of weariness,
And nothing inside of me is cultured.
Of all I have been taught
I know nothing. Devour me
Relentlessly with experience
Crushing in from all sides, below and above.
Thus impalpably let flesh rot
To be apportioned properly to infinity.
My will is made. All of me—and that is All—
Is bequeathed—the will shall not be broken—
To area—illuminated, so that, blinded, my mind
No longer need struggle to forget to understand.
Thus dazed, dazzled and glorified
Is my fitting departure.

CHESS

Dan plays chess by sheer conscious stress.
But man moves with intuitive premonitions.
Purely a matter of the mind our Dan declares
And consciously seeks to chart his mind

Along the lines
Of the rediscovered principles of Greek design.
Man is informed that, were his passions
Frozen compactly thus,
His chances of survival would be plus.

So, man, move your green cube
Over your purple triangle,
And make that red rain-drop falling
Skyrocket up as a flame-oranged sperm—
No ?
Well, you never have played a good game of chess.
How the hell do you expect to be an artist ?

WHITE FRENZY

Tea !
Times it has been in a glass, orange pekoe tea
The color of an orange-tint wine,
Aromatic with herbs and lemons,
Glow-warm to an occasion of hospitable communion
But to-day !! Tea !
And a lump-necked male
Sipping it gutturally through his gulping lips.
. . . How the preciseness of ceremonial
With which radical ladies
Ask for the details of economic situations
In the more socially liberated nations,
Quickly upon the gulp of tea in their throats,
How it irks one, stifles one,
And their quick return to their tea
Self-conscious of having had the floor

With an "interesting" question, proving
Their minds—not idle.

White frenzy should swing itself into one's emotions
At some pale moment.

Spectric colors should illuminate
The gray vapors of a morbid mood
When futility is sieving its ashes
And dry dust upon the nauseated soul.
Sometimes the flames should cease
Their eternal dying in the grate
And leap to white, ungovernable heat.
My Christ ! One cannot forever let time,
Youth and strength
Break their clear skin and lovely bones
On the high pitch of tedium—
Crumble amongst the teacups,
Dust dead where ideas stamped
Toward the granite wall of facts.

Facts, punctuating reality—
And the murmur of conversation
Fluttering in gasps—singed moths—
What is there to expect ?
That expectancy is its own sentence to torture
And the high lights of ecstasy
Will stay for ever in the shadow of the prosaic ?
Is there no far maturity to face the situation
With an ice-blue stare ? An iron will
To let disdain blot out the whole affair,
Without the piteous evasion of abstraction ?

Open the door and let me go,
Out—somewhere to find white frenzy

Swirling and madly lashing,
Somewhere to kill the pale anæmia of weariness
In the heat of mere lustful passion blazing.

A MODERN'S HALF DAY

He was finished with all of this :
Women with malnutrite eyes, fervorous about a social
conscience

Or the need of a sympathetic patronage of the arts.
Now he wanted the vast emptiness of vacant places
Where no buildings or even trees intrude upon the union
Of earth with horizon and snow plains with sky.
So that the whiteness and wideness of space
Could fuse into his intuitions he desired them ;
So that ecstasies and irritations combatant
Could not come and go to mar the tranquillity
Of deep breathing he would go to them.

His white chubby horses with coy eyes and mystic bodies
Standing upon their foreshortened limbs, rotund of flank,
Were insufficient.

His men who had faces that were starved-eyed,
Like saviours denied their disciples,
That had come from his longings and had been scourged
To accept his vision of reality,
Scoffed at him now, with too much intellect
And fine cynicism across the sweetness of their lips.

He had strolled with esthete friends
In and out of exhibits portraying the various movements.
The realities seemed exhausted
And romance had surely waned to the unessential.
Even the primitive and prehistoric lacked a tang.

He had said, and seemed to be understood,
That the ends of this and that
Are actually bathed in obscurity,
Each definite end to have its day of glory.
It is futile insisting on the way
A value shall be perceived,
Or to grant to more than the very few
The validity of a truly personal response
Or emotion that urges inevitable and clear-cut action.

Humanity's impact in its various manifestations
Had driven the man to declaring this the end of this.
So much was done with. He was poised for flight
Without sufficient equipoise to rise
And not fall lopsidedly back again.
There was nothing of the past for him to fall upon
Since he mistrusted the old acceptances
That were but taken that it might be said,
"There is an answer."

How keenly he realized the relative quality of suffering !
But he could not accept the equally relative one of apathy,
Or be one dynamically abstracted,
Washing his hands of this or that detail in life
That now he should be able to accept quite coldly.
He was poised and ready to fly, but from then on—
Where and how——?

It was night. The ocean
Sucked streams of moon into its basin
From many perspectives.
Stars and lights from the city
Dipped flame points of reflection
Into the opacity of water.

Here he was at the end of another day, of many days,
Planting their feet like those of timid rabbits
Into snow, and being washed away.
That however was no matter to consider.
Here was his temporal existence
Caught in the midst of temporality and stalled.
And his energy had stopped protesting.

What would he do ?
What could he do ?

He would
 go to
 bed and
 he would
 sleep.

He would go to bed and sleep,
And his omissions with his commissions
Would dissolve into nothing
For eight hours or for nine hours
Of living when he was not conscious of living,
And that would be the essential affair of existence
For the night,
So one need think no further.

EXACERBATED DESTINY

He burned candles, one at each end of the mantel,
“ Simply because they are cheaper than electricity ”
And would not understand my hint
That they were to me a painful mannerism.
“ I never need a brighter light in reading ”
He assured me when I protested
That I liked a clearer light in so blue a room.

One must accept celibate oddities in accepting him.
Celibate—that is, he is not married
And expects less of life than in earlier years.
I knew the flesh-luminous orchid he kept
In a jade-stemmed vase was a religious romance to him.
Into such things the sensuosity of his spirit
Could suffuse itself, since he could not afford the luxury
Of a Matisse painting.
The flower between ochre candles against blue wall
Subtilized and gently animated this altar of his.
He was so worshipful to art—so loved the word and
“Beauty.”
Synalgia had tautened the neuroticism of his very soul
That much had he yearned towards France and study
there.
After these years it was useless proving to him—
He would agree with his mind—that all of that
Connotation of Paris was habitual discipledom.
Poultice the old affliction of these past denials
As I might at the presystolic moment of his
Submission to my current and restless sophistication
The priapism of his customary yearnings recurred
Incessantly.

Across the square from his studio to the office
In the morning, and back at night to his books
Was to him an esthetic ceremonial,
Seeing the children bathed in the effluvia
Of his literary knowings.
The one time he condescended to attend vaudeville
Every act was atrocious. Afterwards his good-night
Was courteous as always, but aloof with kindly contempt.
Never again could his impulses be aroused

To so far adventure as to change his routine.
The stigma of crassness was upon me.

Primaporous artist. Perhaps it was liquor
That caused him one night to permit me to view
His one painting, done when he was sure of his genius.
It was not unlike—quite too like—the old masters,
This “Men viewing a Venereal Cancer” of his.
There is little one can say and, of course,
I was clumsy witted. He quivered sensitively
As a pet Arabian stallion struck—a passé stallion—
At my whimsy of praise. Indeed I agree
With his feeling that appreciative comments are flippant.
He would not comprehend that I spoke to him
And not of his picture in a whimsical manner.
The silence of the situation embarrassed me
So that I tried to relieve the strain
By speech again, and wished to make it colorful.
He could not know how well I knew
Of studios and schools where men paint,
Gravid with hopes such as his and inconsequential
Of ability, with eyes so reverential
For what they have done that might as well
Not even have been conceived.

His situation was beyond my wish to aid.
I could only blunder and astound his sensibilities.
Either my good taste was third rate or of another age
Than his. I could only give a quicker wound
By my avoidance of him, and not need to act
As though I were entertained, when a gloom
For his dull and trite catastrophe
Fell over me, as the shadows from the candle flames
Painted petals quivering gray of the orchid on the wall.

Yesterday he stepped furtively back into the hallway
As I passed the building of his studio ;

Yesterday I hurried by with mannered preoccupation.
There are so many studios where lonely men abide.
I almost think a sharp relief would come to me
To hear this brooding mid-aged man had died.

IN THE LIBRARY

"Yes, yes, I know them all. That is my life—reading," he said through his yellow vandyke beard, his flabby, oval face gleaming with cranky irritation in the shadow of tortoise-rimmed spectacles.

"I suppose that my medium is neither poetry nor fiction, but literary appreciations. No, not criticism—appreciations." He muttered on—and paused—then, with impatience :—

"Sometimes it irritates me, the library, books, so many. Great characters in them all, but they pall. They don't live one's life for one. . . . In Vienna I almost met—what was his name—great writer, you know. Something prevented—— I'm fond of his things too. . . .

". . . You'd like London. I've crossed the water eight times. Real cosmopolitanism—atmosphere—there. . . . The modern school bothers me somewhat though. I feel out of it. . . . Paris is different. The French tradition pleases me. They know metrical systems. . . . Did I tell you I had some poetry accepted, not strong, not creative, I know—a ballad on Villon—must start somewhere.

". . . Did you read *Sentimental Education* . . . that's monotonous realism for you—that's art. Huysmans, too,

and Hardy, I like them both. Drab, I know, that's the courage of their art. . . . Chuck it though, I like more lightness and sparkle and humour sometimes—I don't get the almost physical joy out of reading I once did ; suppose it's mental or spiritual joy, trained sense you know. . . . I'd like to chuck it all some day though. Ever feel that way ?

“That fellow looks interesting. Perhaps he writes. Of course I can't ask him—— I wonder why people read so much—sugaring life, probably, foolish romantic notions. I damn well got over them. Dye my hair, but a man must look young. No telling when you'll meet some one you want to impress. . . .

“. . . You ought to go to New York. Greenwich village'll like you—young, big future—too impatient though you are. . . . I feel out of it, past forty, jogged the globe a bit, got a degree too late—want to write though. You know an editor told me my style was like Keats'—oh well—another told me it was like Browning's, now that'd get you, wouldn't it—this modern stuff, slush, fad—I can't get it. Of course your things do have sense, you've caught the trick—but you must get music, you know, that's what poetry is—music——

“. . . Well, there's a big field, getting bigger too, in literary appreciations ; can't all be creative. What's the book you recommend—none—really now, I must read more, joking aside—I've exhausted the Russians and Scandinavians—prefer the French, but one must keep up—— Anglo - Saxons are too complacent, aren't they——

“ —By the way, do you like this poem ; think I’ve caught it—

“ No definite impression ?—well—what’s some book you recommend—come out and see me, I get beastly lonely—reading and thinking—reading mostly—”

AIR RHYTHMS

AERO-RHYTHMS

I FLY.
Isolated
As a lone pelican
High I drift.
A motor's monotone,
Continuous,
Is soundless to my ear.
Obstructions do not exist.
Space—space—space—
Extension from me all ways.
Below, the world planet,
Undesired, is torpid.
Time is suspended.
I drift,
Serenely subconscious.
My mind is cleansed,
Without conflictions,
But an organ
To intone itself in space.
Extension eternal,
Externality all blue.
The high sky
Insidiously victimizes me,
A willing serf to the sky.

My motor hums beneath me.
My heart throbs within me.
Both are a part of me.

Desultorily drifting
I fly.

PERSPICUITY

Pirouettes
My plane
To the moon's
Perigee,
Papilionaceously
Lingers in its aura's
Phosphorescency,
Then mutable ever
Flits to Mars'
Perihelion.
O Plane Polytheistic.

Atavistic
In etherealism,
Seeking planets
Phantasmagorical,
Into pellucid
Pleonasm of space
I float,
Evanescently.

Near the sheer blaze
Of the sun

The translucent phlegm
Of my being
Reveals that I
Am the penumbra
Of the universe.

ETHERISM

Deeply upwards
I
Convolute
In circles
Revolutionary.
Sky
Evolves
From impenetrability
To continuance
High
To rise into,
Never above.
In all this
Revolves
The circle,
Fades the sun,
Rain falls.
The mauve,
The soft cerise,
The bronze gold,
Between sunset
And moonrise
Evaporates.
This absorbency
Contains us.

AERO-METRE

On ether
In pale spaciousness
I blend
With subtle infinity.
The wing wires
Of my plane
Whistle a monotone
That lulls
My earthly unrest
To sleep.
The faint blur before me
Of whirring propellers
Soothes my eyes.
I have no objective.
The sky is bare ;
The here and there
Have equal values.
There is no ultimate
To strive for,
Only higher air,
Thinner and more fair
With pervasive vacuousness.

My plane sees a star to vault,
But tediously pendulates
In measured extension
Far below.

CONSUMMATION

In pursuit my plane
Penetrantly perceives

The ineffable fallacy
Of premature theories
On insurmountable space.
Reciprocal hypnotism
Unifies the objective
Of my plane and the pursued.
The sky's mysticism
Is multi-complicated
By prismatic illuminations
From my fiery exhalations.
The litany of attack
Creatively promulgates itself
To isolated planets,
Startled spectators
Of my persistence.
Area is fuel to be consumed.
The wilderness of sky
Is foliated resplendent
With color in permeable black.
The centre of all homage
Alters with my plane.

VOLPLANETOR

Insoluble in high air's
Quiescency,
My plane, on earth a sophist,
Naively reconnoitres.
Sinuously, nose retrousse,
It explores thinning stratum
Of atmosphere and volplaning,
Deems itself a static medium.
How it routs pusillanimous planets
From its path at night,

Dazzling them pyrotechnically
With sovereign spectrums,
Belched forth sporadically.
My purposelessness prognosticates
The heterogeneity of world events.
Nevertheless the sky's oscularity
Propitiates my primal impulses,
And tedium is thwarted.

AERO-LAUGHTER

You've never laughed
Until the world
Has been beneath you
A mosaic map
Of lines and dots,
Called roads and mountains,
By minute moving spots,
Named "men."
Ah, the jollity
Of this petty panorama.

When your plane,
Overcome with mirth,
Ripples in air pockets
With uncontrollable lurches,
Nosing down with a dart
To frighten the tiny earth,
Then recovers, fleeting
To heights beyond eyes seeing,
Far from earth hearing,
You are all tense
With the comedy of life,
And the world's being.

At night the stars
Chortle gleefully with you.
The moon beams,
Benignly sharing your joy,
Thinking—" I laugh,—
The world !—rather one world,
The buffoon of them all."

MOOD DECISIONS

IF love is what is needed in life I'm dead. I feel only positive negations, disgust, rebellion, doubt. But a laugh saves one from bitterness. Look out though. You don't want to pat a bull on the neck because he stands for it.

But I guess you're safe enough, you mirage of an old maid's romantic phantasies. Some week forget to bathe, so that you will possess some slight quality that can be known as personality.



It takes a great deal of expectancy to condemn some things. There are the grayed skeletons of several thousand dead cows, horses, sheep—some men—out in the desert through Arizona and New Mexico. That's a large portion of America.

You must know how much finer it is to live in these states than in the east. A cow's skeleton is a merry playmate compared to a Wall Street broker, or a Vesey Street intelligentsia journalist out to show you a good time. And snakes? Playful?—I guess so. Cows lie down and die there and the heat is so intense that six days after one can sit on their carcasses and not smell a putrescence, so quickly does all moisture pass into the atmosphere.

On the desert cactus plants stand around, prickly virgins wondering why the yelping coyotes, who nozzle up to the

moon, drink sky, as though the sand had shrivelled their throats, don't trot over the land to their sweeties.

But after all the cactus virgins can't be so extremely virginal. There are so many families.

There's distance out in the desert. Extension, rather than unfulfilled intention.

— — —

Who turned the sky upside down and spilled all the mess where New York is? Still, the place is beautiful if you look at it that way. One must—good God, man, yes, one must—appreciate the gray, the inevitable. See the ash cans, and ash clothes on the line. Empty undershirt sleeves wave to brick chimneys to come over and shake a shimmy. Empty underdrawer legs puff out in the wind like amorous cormorants and call that a dance of invitation. Scraggly cats screech revilements at each other, but exchange favours in the end, anyway—why stay mad—the end to desire is the same for us all. If creation is beautiful all this is marvellous beyond the words of spontaneous poets, and much more to be written about than nymphs by a poet whose wife is fat and a poor cook, and one that he only sees in the morning before her eyes are more than foggy.

— — —

There was a man with a delicate face, but of steel cut with the utmost precision. The steel was too brittle to bend a whit, too finely carved to withstand knocks or blows.

No, he didn't shatter and die. He swam around on the surface of existence and finally anchored to a pier. There his steel got rusty, because mussels and jelly fish attached themselves to him with their moisture. Having gone the

way of corpulency by external cohesion, his spirit tagged along as valet to the routine of life.

— — —

Your eyes fall upon me. Their light is a great volume of fresh water falling upon my tired body. Your words are carpenters building a house around my heart, for it to dwell in and prosper. But what about the gas bill, and hot water for a bath ?

— — —

Years, and years. Never grow in rows as I planted them. Crooked rows of years that run all over the plantation.

Pull the shades down. Sleep takes me into herself like a mother snake taking her young back into her belly.

When I awake long polished fingernails reach out to clutch my eyes. What a, what a, what a, goddamned headache ! Vermilion, scalding, vibrating. Filed fangs rip my head open. So. It's open then, if you don't like the spectacle—well, you aren't consulted.

— — —

That fat woman bumped me from behind. She gave in like a feather tick with no slats underneath. It takes little to make me desire what I desired. I'm wrong though. Maybe her pulp hides somebody who matters.

— — —

Some men listen to music as a dog gnaws a bone—snarl if they are disturbed. The slightest noise causes them to snap. Which causes me to suspect that music is rather a third rate thing.

— — —

If one can't value oneself for what one is, and place a value upon what is about one, how can there be any surety of

any evaluations for one, social, religious, or political. Tradition itself is evaluated only after an evaluation of evident reality.

— — —

Goya must have led a very complete life to appreciate so well the necessary quaintness of evil. His vulgarity has a cosmic depth that never could be erased from existence, the simplicity of which becomes complex and exaggerated only because the "pure" are so impure.

— — —

You love me, but what of that. I have seen cormorants make love on seal rocks. I have seen flamingo villages builded on little else than love. I have wondered how they, giraffes, elephants, and other grotesque species have accomplished the act, and have thought of droll advice to give them. (Such as belly in, for the flamingoes, and never mind for the giraffes, which nevertheless may have been unkind.) It was all comic and grotesque. You need not say you love me. I don't give a tinker's damn.

— — —

I like the sort of men who make fine murderers, maniacs, undertakers, preachers—malcontents. I like the kind of men who are ribald and careless, or keep quiet but remain savage nevertheless. If life can't have a kick, the thrill, the jazz, what the hell is it worth, anyway?

— — —

Really, one should quit having the spirit drag along after a finished bit of beauty like a rag tail hanging to a kite. Music, mountains, the ocean, dancers—even some women—are very beautiful. But what's to be done about it. The heart need not think it does any good to get rheumatic

with the ache of wanting that beauty pressed closer to it. Too close and your eyes get blinded with a desire for a consummation beyond the sensual. Complete beauty is another man's wife and a faithful spouse, which may be inconsiderate, but so it is.

— — —

Say, kid (E. C.), lay off moaning about how young you are, how your sex bothers you, and the tragedy of it all. Quit shouting about the dreams you have that weaken your back. Wear a steel corset or go to bed with a plank if you can do no better. These tales are all old, old, old. And besides, I don't care about you. I want to have you listen to how I suffer.

— — —

Don't tell me to do this or that as if I were a thing made by the weather, wet when it rains, cold when it's winter. If my own words at my own time do get me into a hellhole, I'll take the words and their consequence too.

— — —

When the Spanish girl dances, lava in the bowl of a crater is curdling, coiling and lashing in the night. She is savage, ominous, and not to be possessed. Fire whips aside the ashes which her limbs must become. Sorrow is an excrecence that quivers and fades in the illumination of her gesture. Beauty strikes me across the eyes as the sting of a blacksnake whip in a vicious hand. I sweat and tremble.

— — —

Day smiles, but a frozen smile. A shaft of spent moonlight has buried itself, a death arrow to the dawn. Pallid, with

iced ecstasy, a lover stumbles—snow where his feet have passed covers their footprints—over the street from the chamber of his beloved, dead from the violence of his embrace. Dead, and amber still. But her love had not been cold. Death will ice many an ecstasy. Death is the clearest of ecstasies.

— — —

The white hare runs in from the lettuce patch. Its eyes are rubies. The white hare will sleep, so that its soft belly quivers gently. The white hare will seem to float upon the earth so lightly it will rest. I shall sit and wonder how the white hare can be so tranquil.

— — —

I laugh because it's something to say, or it's a perverted and a more final way of weeping. I am not the sort to weep.

Lift me up through the willows so I can squeeze the moon, and see if he's the kind of fellow who's jumpy when you touch him. I'll put him to bed with the earth, and put out the stars so they can enjoy their nuptials in the dark. Engineers, here's a job for your technical skill. Blast sequence and order. We want a new experience.

— — —

When the water wagon passes to flush the streets, every passer-by runs out of the way of the water. When a man thinks, to flush the situation of imbecilities and sacrosanct inanities, much the same thing happens, only the passers-by throw bricks or decayed fruit at the man.

— — —

Goya's witches are so exceedingly wicked looking that they rise up in the air with the exuberance of their own evil emotions.

Think! You! So do I, but discount the mental stress of both of us. You can't coerce your morality upon me because it is reasonable. I reason beyond your reason. I've seen steam go away and return from its visit as water. My dead grandmother can have all reason to keep her feet warm in heaven, or cool in hell, wherever it is the redoubtable old dame holds forth.

I'm heavier than a pregnant bitch with the "beauty" that's been shoved upon me. Wish I were sterile of such—perhaps am—but my memory retains. Ah, immortality—and is not stupidity the most patronized of all immortalities?—would that I were naked, running on the hills, comparing the best parts of my body with like parts on wild boars, rams, bulls, and bucks. And responsibility were of market value so that I could pawn it at the brokers.



What does the direction we are going have to do with matter? You have a small mind to quibble over such things. Whether it is the earth you are sitting on, or an inverted cloud you hang to is secondary to how you feel about it, old dear. How many children have you, or would you have if so many possibilities hadn't been carried in fish-skin sacks out upon the bosom of the ocean—*via* the beach, or the flushing pipe?

Indirection—not left or right, up or down—indirection. Not where. Be. And to extinction all other ideation, hot, cold, wet or dry.



It is well to be a wise man, but a man's a poor sort who can't laugh at wisdom. Eating bacon is not so exquisite a sensation as to smell bacon frying; it not only finishes discovery, but also fails to meet expectation. Nevertheless,

for a hungry man, it is wiser to eat the bacon ; consequently such wisdom, and other varieties, are highly unsatisfactory.

— — —

You or any man, matter little to me for what you know or say ; my sophistication rises or falls to meet the demands of the occasion so far as it is able, but nevertheless you, whoever you are, are not me, and I don't quite understand you.

— — —

An illiterate lumberjack used to talk to me on woodlore, and woman lore. Between depositing great squids of saliva-wet snuff upon the flour sacks in the country store—his hangout—he would make decisions on life and its where-withals as profound as any scholar's, and the fact that he did not know the names of the great sages of the past, does not alter the fact that he and they agreed on many profound subjects. I didn't like the looks of his yellow teeth, or care for his snuff-yellowed beard, or his habit of spitting. But wisdom does not always, possibly seldom, come from sources that please the fastidious senses.

— — —

All of the custodians of the law must assuredly be castrated unless they are already impotent. Too little attention has been paid in the past to the cultivation of appetites which Christian men know we should have, but which few men do have, while much attention has been paid to the gratification of vulgar desires which cause men to rise up, but do not uplift them. This is all wrong. One need only look at capons, geldings, and steers, to understand how an operation increases the market value of all male things.

Thoughts, quite as well as crows, are carrion, and more vicious in many cases than are the birds. Nevertheless they should be blessed, for what they succeed in rending and destroying, deserves destruction, and their attacks on truth, and the morality that abides, but emphasize and bring into clearer attention the unglamorous and deepest realities.



Words are tricked out hussies who think they look chaste because they are in style. Nothing to do with getting where we are going. Too discreet. Intention comes out best like a young pig shot from its mother's womb, not because she talked about having it, or even knew that such a thing would happen.



Hey, you lunkheads, fatty brains, belly-fillers. You who shout your glory because you supply the materials that permit our organs to function, shut up! I have something to say, and don't want to have to deal with people so lard-minded that they must be hit with a shovel across their faces to have an impression made upon them.



Be the world's meat. Raw meat too. The world is your flesh multiplied seventy times seven, several times. Bite into it and see if you like your own flavour.



I have repose! You would have looked at San Francisco before the earthquake, and said "how calm," at a sleeping crater, and said "so restful." You don't understand that I am and don't know what to do about it. I'm hot resenting that. I'm so hot that your lukewarm mentality makes me shiver when it touches my lividity.

Get out your husband's pyjamas and soak them for the wash. If they have been worn but once they still need to be cleaned. Poor fellow! with you as a wife. There are some things that won't be held back by talking about discrimination.

— — —

Pompeii is no more obliterated for the wave of earth that submerged its domiciles and erstwhile glory than is many a spirit encrusted with propriety.

— — —

It is not by idiom and by rule that one becomes and remains aware either of moral or of esthetic value; words are not conceptions when their lustre dies.

No one need wince when morality is mentioned except he be victim of his own narrow interpretations.

— — —

Many enjoy the emotion of "fine thought transmuted into emotion"; fewer, however, recognise that acknowledgement of certain inevitabilities signifies no lack of passion, but rather indicates sentiency beyond the temporal and personal.

So that, in discovering a lack of esthetic quality, one discovers only a lack of understanding beyond the environmental.

PROSE SKETCHES

AZURE GALE

COLD night, with little gusts of winds between my teeth, gulped in my throat, cold night of wind. Cut me ! Cut me ! Pierce me to the heart and freeze its expectancy to hardness. Do not leave me wind. Do not leave me Darkness.

I can never, never—but I will—I do not want to, I shall refuse—but go—back to the desultory dullness of my warm room—and I shall not sleep. All night long thinking will cut me deeper than your chill—and I will hear you rebelling—I too will be rebelling—

No I am not afraid. I have always been afraid to be one of the timid ones, the uncertain, the cautious ones. No one outside is interested in terror. I am as hard as you wind. But hardness does not suffice,—there is nothing I would not blaspheme—but Wind, wind, what does blasphemy accomplish for either of us. We must subside. We are no better off than the wailers, and the humble ones—

Nevertheless keep your vicious arrogance. Wear yourself to stillness, to death—do not listen to the careful ones. That is not wisdom they speak. They will too succumb—I am cold, cold, so cold that I am frozen to clarity—cold with contemptuous indifference. Your blast breaks into thin sheets of shattered ice—repetitiously in staccato continuousness—unrhythmed, wind—kissing me, clamouring into my skin, biting frantically into my blood.

I know the madness of you, the coldness of you, the resistant insistence——

Wind ! Wind ! Do not subside. You inevitably shall be made to, but never degradate yourself with ingratiating.

POOR OLD DEAR

Reality ! she's the last word in that, really. You should have heard her the other day when I went into her shop. She was dozing on one of the side benches because no customers came in during those hours of the day, and said she had been thinking of the rats over in Paris, and how they swarmed the street and over people's bodies in the Bastille. Poor old dear ! she has never been in Paris and has no more idea than a spider what a bastille is. Can't read a word. Somebody had told her a story about the rats.

And then right after she exclaimed, "O these people round here and their eternal talk, and ideas about life ! Life ! well, dearie, it existed before there were any ideas."

O she's the realest thing you'll find around that bunch, and that vermilion shock of hair ; and the contraptions she calls jewelry that she collects. An eye for color. She does get things together that should be that way. You must have heard about the time she came romping in one morning laughing and singing out "Hurrah, hurrah, I'm young again ; I've been raped," and told about the policeman she had let take her to a dance because life was so dull amongst "us intellectuals."

Poor old Dear ! always declares she is an accident ; an accident of an old apple orchard that happened one of these moonlight nights.

VILLAGE

The saloons are all closed now. Boards are across their doorways. Spiderwebs hang across the broken panes of glass.

Al Wilson would not have cared though if he were alive to-day. Long before prohibition was ever considered his wife had him blacklisted at all the saloons, and told the grocers not to sell him extracts of any sort ; not to sell him anything in fact. She forced him to the cornsilos.

Poor gentle Mrs. Wilson ! She had no cornsilo to make her forget her straits. She was a desolate figure, not made for desolation either. To the last she would wear gloves, neatly patched ; would go to church every Sunday and march with dignity up the aisle to sing with her quavery soprano in the choir. To the last she would make calls and ask ladies to call upon her. She at least could do the correct thing if Alfred *was* a town character.

Other men—the tobacco chewers spitting from their benches at the livery stable, the church Deacon Davis whose walk home was ceremonial with hat lifting and circumspect gallantry, and with talks about the new minister, for there was never a time when there was not a new minister—the other men, drinkers too but not “ad-dicts,” would, between their pool games, and talk about getting a new postoffice for the town, reminisce about the time when the Wilsons were first married. Everybody was so sure Alfred would make congress—so fine a gentleman, and so brilliant a young attorney, “promising, Ha, Ha, Ha, but promises ain’t allus kept” Gus the horseshoer would blow out over his tongue of snuff. Poor Al ! no gitting around the fact that Mrs. Wilson was a charming woman, soft voice and so accomplished a musician—too nice ; the ruination of Al !

Now all the Wilsons had was five children, and one of them not quite right. Alfred drunk, it was said, when—O yes, a sad case, a sad case.

The saloons are closed now. Last summer one young attorney shot himself because life was so dull in the old town, and a living so hard to make. "He didn't have likker to cheer him oop like Al Wilson did in his young days" Gus told me, as always, over his cud of Copenhagen snuff.

There may be other restless ones. One boy used to tell me that I was the only one "to understand." Understand? I could see that he was becoming one more of the restless ones—to what end?—but what is the end of an end?

Cobwebs and dusty broken window panes are in so many deserted buildings in the old town. Even the mudhole in which I learned to swim is dry, life is so dry, dust dry there.

JAZZ OPERA AMERICANO

Come now, come now. For Gawd's sake, shiver your spine. Syncopate the spectrum. French horn blast, potato whistle shriek.

One ancestor was a boar tusked dog wolf who howled mad bayings at the moon—a lonely wolf—a vicious hound—a sad brute—but a hellhound for noise:

Show us how you spend the money, spend the money. God, man, feel my pulse, dear God—I'm a liar—it is spurting Semitic blood. Niagara rush in my veins with Semitic caution. Show me how the money is spent. Magnificently gorgeously. Highcolors. Peacocks, humming-birds, pheasants? Nature, bah! Spend big money.

In the line was a bull moose who bellowed mating calls forever and ever, mate or no mate, he still had hungers deep

as impalpability not to be torn from him however he bellowed—tom tom, a hunter's horn, with a high yodel and the rattle of a string of missionary teeth—all in the high wind shriek and the moon splintered to white and vermillion orange dripping, green swirling and a dizzy spectrum and I fainting but never fainted in a swirling vortex of colored rhythms, uneven dissonant and tragic—wild, wild, wild man, why are you shouting wild man? Dance jazzo, swirl me—my legs are buoys on an unsteady ocean of sound.

Young, young—hell no, not youth but energy, and what, sweet blood tattooed Jesus, do we do with energy? Strong rushing red blood—whatt'hell's to be done with it? Desire? Grow sophisticated? . . . My thoughts will not be suppressed however. Set that to music, kid. Reality. Give it a shivery tune. Jewish, Chinese, East Indian. Shakety shake, shakety shake—Jazz, Jazz, whirl, wild women, whirl.

Sucked into sound—thrilled voluptuous—and the waves of rhythm carry me away, lap sensuous rhythm tongues about me soul-body-mind, push me, seduce me. And I am willing—anxious for the seduction. Jazzo, Jazzo, swirled and swung into the vermillion, the purple, swinging, swaying, bending, tones—not in the feet moving, not in the body bending, but in the blood leaping to a syncopated rhythm.

High recklessness. What comes after what comes after? Be careless. Sensible cautious—damnfoolishness—with a half pint bottle for six—O yo ho—O yo ho—my ancestors were savage brute vicious ones—the line's diluted—

Crack—crackle—lights out—the bulls.

FIRE BUG

Ho, you Christmas Tree burning in the street, casting the light of your flames upon the carcase of that horse

which died of the cold or of old age—or just died perhaps because he wanted to—you are burning clear and clean. How does it happen ? Green needles snap to bright orange flames—pale bright orange—or is it blue, or purple, who knows what the colour of a flame is—or of a flame's aura—and of all auras of its heat's irradiations that force the cold out and away from all sides of it.

Fir tree on fire, I wish your conflagration would spread, catch the buildings around you, leap to the church spires, run along the telephone wires to the skyscrapers—burn, burn, burn, keep burning clean and clear and let me stand. Your bright flames burning all civilization to clean ashes. All moralities, and all non-moralities ; all traditions and all rebellions. I want to be clear with emptiness—to be bending over where the fire has been, burying my hands in clean ashes that blow away in the cold air when I lift my palms opened upward to the sky. Ashes—beautiful ashes—and around me, nothing, nothing, nothing—and the wind will sweep even the sky away. Then there will be only I with my wishes, and they will be the reality and the only reality, and I will be cleansed.

O there is nobody else I care about, fir tree on fire. Burn and with your clear fire, bring me that desire for a Christmas present and whenever—it will not be belated.

THOUGHT GHOSTS ON MUSIC

Intrinsic Value ! What is it ?

Events weave the texture of the occasion. Time had been senile through a Mozart concerto. Then as though sulphurbodied, fluxes of melody stung wasp fashion into the deadly dullness. The porcelain eyes of a rosy-cheeked greybeard

staring with the childish boredom of pain at not being able to understand, or appreciate, caused a whimsical emotion.

How thoughts annihilate beauty—or ideas—thoughts may be an emotion—"Dynamic force here," some one says of Wagner. "How I detest the gods in the offing, the sublime thought, the grandeur in Wagner. He places ludicrous impositions upon one," another says. Listening to a Wagner symphony which he did not recognize, later on, he enjoyed it, or said he did, as abstract sound.

After all it is the meaningless that conquers. There is no slush that the mind can sweep aside; no dross that an X-ray gaze can burn through; no form that diamond-hard mental will can slash. After Mozart came Strawinsky. Intrinsic value? It was insolent to the trained ear. Which was its salvation.

Strawinsky concerto. A snicker, to me, amidst the propriety of throngs properly come on this correct evening for a set time of one hour and a half to properly appreciate music. Then to evaporate to their variegated habitats, seasonably adorned in their goings—to don your appreciation of "the arts" with your aigrettes, tiaras—value? Strawinsky—a snigger chortled between Mozart and Schumann—"laughing up his sleeve at us, and not letting us in on the joke with titles as does Strauss," men behind me declared. The innovation jarred senses that ten conscientious years of musical training had grooved. An innovation that might cause them to retrain their senses. I could hear Strawinsky tittering up his sleeve, and hear the titter giggling along his ribs, making them to rattle—and that is another theme for modern music. I enjoyed Strawinsky. He might mean anything because he meant nothing. Half images burlesqued in the multi-hued vapours of my sub-mentality.

I have been a vermillion geyser breaking into petals of hot mist that freeze to crack, clinking on the too thin-ringing glass of silence. I have been pulp tingling with the pricks of melody, and melting into annihilation of despair—a river sensing extinction in its pale ripple to the ocean of sound that seeps away—but I distrust ecstasy—not to restrain it—let it rhapsodize until I rationalize—but it seldom repeats itself. My reason cannot explain or reclaim it.

On Strawinsky ! Split catguts, and rattle tin cans. Take skeleton bones and strings of missionary teeth. Create senseless instruments of noise—utilize the Chinese tone scale, clattering falsetto whimperings, insolent infantile jeerings—what does sound mean—harmony or discord—and something in me will run ahead or back—and sense, not to intelligibility, but to response. Life is not measured by either trained or moral evaluations. Value ? What is a criterion ? I feel. And I detest emotionalism. But I feel detestation. I am over-emotional with my irritations. I abhor superman proclamations, Whitman humanitarianisms ; I insist on the littleness of the greatest man. Intellect rips them all open and shows that the food they feed their spirit on is groping hunger, desire on desire on desire. The glamour of hope, the trickery ! The nausea of the intellect, the “ religion made of geometry ”—the provincial assumption of “ being coldly scientific.”

Value ? What's to be understood ? Yes or no are easier attitudes than interrogation, but they prove little but lethargy of the sensing organism.

A silly game—art—music—religion. To trick ourselves into having ourselves somewhat—if not remarkable then lasting—somehow “ consciously creative.” The insignificant ones know. The—is great permitted in an unsublimated sense—ones doubt and dogmatize their doubt at

last into a scepticism, a cynicism, or a prophetic vision. Inevitability is futile as a philosophy. Faith casts itself imploringly upon itself and explains not even itself. Satire peeks at seriousness and discreetly withdraws into detachment and a laugh. Both are actually shy children. The laugh is not the answer. Some day that game is ended, and the verdict is a question.

Value?—and I suspect beauty and truth of tricks. Give me communion of understanding. Still I cannot take his, yours, or her interpretation. My mind rips it to pieces, and then is afraid it has been vicious and perverse. So we end—wonderingly.

STEEL STRUCTURES

I like the way steel frames etch their designs against the sky, skeletons of a fantasy that can be garbed with colour and contour——

As the wire netting of a butterfly catcher mounted upon two stilts suggested the outlines of a Bird of Paradise aurioled with illumined white and a crest of gold-gleaming feathers——

And a bridge swung across a mountain abyss—or Brooklyn Bridge——

Or the wood scaffolding about an ancient cathedral to be remodelled—the austerity, severity, and geometric decision of the lines and squares—conjunctive polyhedrals——

There is no colder more final beauty than that of bare skeleton frames that make outlines high into the sky—the ascetic reduction of problems in engineering—the finite chart of infinity for the temporal eye——

They are garmented with stone, wood, and color of paint only to lose some intangibly defiant glamour, that has the

inexplicably romantic qualities of all things bleak and perhaps a little wilfully starved. There is no subtlety so complex as the enigma of inutilizable simplicity of outline, so vastly preferable to the complacent and smugly practical structure.

THE ARTIFICIAL LAKE

Across the corrugated surface of the waters actually calm beneath their slight ripple toy steamers chug, in straight lines. The arrogantly coy swans stir with unwilling dignity from their paths, eyeing the intruders with a curiosity not so cute as that of the plump caressable ducks, one of which has had to cease pointing its pintail at the sky and swim in frenzy out of a steamer's way.

This is a day of plump and comfortable contentments.

PLOUGHED LAND

The clean barrenness of soils affects me strangely, as I stand looking across a thousand acres of new-turned soil.

One could stand in the middle of that raw earth, in the middle of the earth—and the centre of the earth must be where one is—and shout, breathe exuberantly, yodel, sing—and who shall say that it is not great singing—curse—maybe one would not be permanently happy, or free—but there would be clear air to breathe, and noise to make.

Even if they are alive and of to-day there is something archeological about the plough, plough horses and their driver standing an eighth of a mile away. Let them move and toil, but do not speak to them. They are well enough as a design for some fountain but as for intimacy—

No, no, breathe the sky—let the sun play over-passionately with your body—

HISTORY OF THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

Whoops, mah boy, the sacrosanct portals of that liberty and situation where the bricklayer is sacristan to civilization, with the butcher and tailor high up in command; and the moon pishes and piddles down upon liberated lovers debating the number of offspring advisable in their economic position! We're out of the rut of rusticity plotting with masons and diplomats of the coal shovel how to settle all our affairs more comfortably.

Lots of rain. That's what the farmers want. They are pleased, let it be remarked, with what the sheep come to out on the meadows. Many new lambs. Much greater profit this year. That is evident.

She's a woman with lots of push I've heard. The kind to make a good wife. A woman with lots of push is what a man should have now that prices are so high. Etc., etc., etc.

Answering yours of the nth instant. No! Yours very truly. Good-bye.

THE GERMAN MOTHER

Maybe she wasn't German; she had an accent, that was all; and two children whose noses were always running, and a husband who sold groceries on the road and might have a Ford to run before the summer was out. Why did she have another child? I dunno. She always said herself two was enough, and even before she had them her aprons were generally dirty and her dishes sticky. And you should 'a seen her clothes out on the line. Such a housekeeping!

But one day there the baby was. We hadn't thought she looked as though it'd be there so soon, but there it was. Of course it had colic soon. Such a housekeeper. Then it died, and she was very proud of it. It looked so like a

beautiful wax doll lying in its little coffin amongst the white roses that her husband had bought it. And she knew how to mourn, how to weep, and how days after to sit looking dazed and suddenly to begin to weep gently and end with great heaving sobs. But she didn't forget to yell at her little boy "Louie, you come here, Louie; Louie, you come here," and to cuff his ears and his sister's ears because they wouldn't play outside the kitchen door all of the time. Though how could she expect them to play there when the ground was covered with coffee-grounds, and tea-leaves, and bits of slop leavings from her dish-water, which she always emptied right at the kitchen steps? Well—she quit weeping for the baby which had been such a lovely corpse within a month or so. Really, it didn't seem much longer than a month before she had another baby. Such a woman!

SCIENCE

It was conceded that he was profound. In the vacuity of social gatherings his profundity squashed upon the atmosphere, far too weighty to be shoved aside by intellects of trivial brawn.

Yet some rabbit-brained man was for ever dancing off lightly with laurels he had intended for himself, as a crown to his benign dignity. An upstart who could read none of Homer, and knew no Egyptian script, who indeed didn't even have a library of his own, gained great honours by frivolously untraditional discoveries.

He was profound. He could explain the metaphysical universe once for every week day and three times for a Sunday. But one day he ceased explaining because two insignificant chemicals refused to associate as he was

demonstrating a profound point regarding the disintegration of energy. And colleagues on the faculty who had not spoken to each other for years associated at last to collaborate at pall-bearing. The procession was three blocks long, than which few processions are longer unless it's for a moving picture star.

HISTORY PROFESSOR

"Now in the interests of scholarships—uh huh—yes—in the interests of scholarship" he'd lecture, asking for bibliography, collateral reading, and annotations, which requests never interfered with students' thoughts on Saturday night dances, or Monday night drunk ons.

It's a shame, kiddo, I'll tell you it's a shame that jazzy people like Alexander, Cleopatra, Hannibal, and Henry the Eighth should be annotated thus by a male pedagogue who wears his winter underwear through June, and uses a Pinkham pill for a laxative twice a week to keep his system in order.

A SUBTLY SATIRICAL ONE

AND A WOMAN—SHUSH—A MOTHER

Surely you comprehend completely when I say I twitch my intellectual eyebrows. You know? Of course, you know. You are so intuitive. . . . Yes—ah—er—well, yes, the boy has promise—and so young—he leaps too far forward in asserting and falls in pulling himself back. Ah—huh, huh, yes, O, yes, yes. Failing in his third dimension, you know.

Regarding that woman with him now—what do *you* think of her? As I think? You *are* perceptive. One need never explain a subtlety to you I perceive.

FROM ADOLESCENCE TO INTELLIGENCE

NIGHT

AT midnight in a darkened room—alone
When a terror of desolation
Perturbs to a madder madness
The mania of life.

No dreams come,
Nothing is completed
But desire curdling.

Across the room the dark sheen of a mirror
Gleams
And phantasies gesticulate
To annihilation.

Gibberish !
Skeletons chortling.
Is death so dead as life ?
Clean lipbone to kiss
Without the touch of excremental flesh
The pure traditions teach one to—abhor.
Gibberish—all laws,
All but desire.

BARBARIQUE

Ferocious—rrrh—rrrh—
Fangs—hornteeth—limebones—

Six men and a pale Christian
For the cannibals' feast.
The wild lemon moon, with a wind-sugared tang
Drifts in a cobalt sky.
Teeth gleam in chortles and smiles
Smacking through the smoke leaves.

Bodies carmined, streaked with orange
Zagged with a sapphire design—
Nose rings of ruby, ear rings of pearl,
Nose rings of flame, lip rings of smoke,
Lap and overlap in the dangleings,
And the tin-tinted rain begins to fall,
Glossing black overgleaming bodies,
Lithe frames that are strong with elastic snap,
Black tempered steel bodies bending,
Legs that dance while the tom-toms bang,
Bellies that tauten and relax inflated with breath—
A banquet of flesh is on
The men who are eaten are gone
Into the other's intestines
And superstitious dread knows where
From there.

Teeth glistening, eyes roll shinily,
Loin muscles hardened—
A feast is on—the wind is up—
The flames are leaping—no weeping—
The elements are cruel—all men must die—
Never a sigh this eve through the forest
Where the wild wind shrieks—
Even the patriarchal trees snap in the gale

And fall to dry—
Scream as you die, wildmen, scream,
A call to hunger,
Then lie as you fall, wildmen, lie.

STALLIONS

In France, where a string of ten stallions
Draw a long wagonload of granite stone
For tomb-sculpturing
And nicker and start with desire when let to rest
There!— can they not make
Even deathstone leap with energy
And strain after their massive beauty.
Ah, stallions, dynamic flesh-engines
Tautening leather thongs
As they haul stone,
Coy restive, and tigerish beyond fatigue,
Men have also harnessed Niagara
And its torrenting waters
But you all remain,
Wild with strength and beauty.

VERSAILLES GUIDE

He told me historic scandals :
Of how various queen-wives
Died of broken hearts
Because their kings
Had so many mistresses,
That Louis XIV. and that the XV.
He spoke of Le Duc Phillippe
Who painted his cheeks—
Also his eyebrows—
And rode in the streets
Regardful only of men,

Who poisoned his wife
Or in somewise rid himself of her.
If the guide would only be contemporary
With his scandalous information
He would not need to be a guide.
But he had rosy cheeks himself,
And perhaps a romantic nature.

TO A DANCER

Perhaps the sky is raining jewels upon you
In lights more sparkling than sunlight,
And they swirl with you in circles,
Red radiant golden green glimmering convolutions.
For all the brilliance and life
An atmosphere of denial
Pervades where you have gone.
Your movement is an invocation
To much that has been sealed with sacred thought.
The gesture of women who wept at the sepulchre
Has been caught static in your stillness.
Your feet are hideous and marred with callouses
But music breaks deathlessly about you.
As you go from the musty cell of life
To beauty, the whited absolute of emotion,
Castigation carves your going
Into cadenced images of carved fragile stone.

AUTUMN LOVE

You grasp at joy so breathlessly
That I know you are suffering.
It is not that the year is dying
But that you do not know why the year has been.

When first it came in
It was clear and untelling as a baby's eye.
The gaze of the year ahead is still vacuous.
The leaves are falling down.
Another year will not want old leaves.
O, if your kiss were only warm.
If your laugh did not blow away like dry leaves.
But there is nothing I can do to help you.
I can kiss you
But you will search on I know.

FIREFLY SWAMP

The wind brings from the mountains
And from the ocean, much of vastness
Of wild tang, and also of tranquillity.
Waspwings flash a golden gleam
Through their aluminium transparency,
And dragonflies, utterly capricious
Prismatic rays, and humming-birds,
Concentrated rainbows,
Pulsate and vibrate in the dust
Of the evening air spreading its veil.
Little boy, do not run, do not cry out.
Sit still, and scarcely breathe.
Do not dream dreams but leave that to the night
And suffer the blackness to envelop you all.
Then kiss the soil of the bank you rest on
In the dark darkness of completest night.
If blackness has made beauty an unreality
And a phantom pain of your yearning memory,
You too are concealed, so no one can know
That you suffer.

Out in the meadow when the wind is blowing
Running with the tulips to the ocean
And the bitterness of ocean air is in my lungs
And then, only forgetfulness that is freedom.

UNREST

Wild geese fly from the north.
From the moving angles come soft honkings,
Tenderly discordant, wildly urgent,
And I am one with them
Until they are lost to vision,
Upward and onward drifting—
Leaving part of them in me,
Halted, bound.

Once in a lonely swamp
A gray Canadian goose, lame-winged,
Broke my arm,
Viciously protestant of my touch,
Terror-stricken of the life
That I am born to, dutiless to resent.

THE SQUIRREL

Once the little beast
Was frantic in its cage,
Scrambling against the wires
Which hurled it back.

Later
When a hand enfolded it,
The squirrel became tense wire,
Bared its teeth
And dug its claws deep into the hand.
It came not to resist this.

After a time
The cage was opened,
But the squirrel did not come out.
When lifted out it did not understand.
Finally it played around the cage
Then went back through the door,
Always.

PELICAN

Satyr swan,
White burlesque,
Floating—
A cloutish dream,
Promontory shadow—
Droll autocrat of absurd reality.
You are a fattish lady,
Very white, too soft,
Interpreting the spirit of spring.

MOTH

Lepidoptera,
Fluttering, misshapen papilion
Subjected to the travail of beauty
By the concentration of brooding moonlight,
Then corrupted
To flutter amongst the cabbage leaves
And over the dung heaps.

OBSEQUIY

There is inestimable companionship in graveyards
Where the unavailing gestures of impotent hopes

Are sealed in earth overset with rock, and many dead
No longer fret and fume, but rest ; while the knowledge
Of the life their corpses once have housed
Is breathing on the granite and the marble slabs
When the atmosphere about is conscious, if with vainest
grief.

BURIAL

Geometry is a perfect religion,
Axiom after axiom :
One proves a way into infinity
And logic makes obeisance at command.
Outside of the triangle, cubes, and polystructures
There is restless pummelling, pounding and taunting.
The end is diffused into channels
Every step into eternity—and steps are endless.

MAD SPRING

The year has set no new fashion
For other years, spring has come
Lilac-laden,
And trees, bushes, and soil where seeds lay
Have burst with green inundation of foliage.
The Manchurian pheasant cock
Chuckles in hysteria of thwarted passion.
Mad are events : mad is the situation ;
With mating season on and his mate long dead.
All the will that life is lived for
Is prisoned by denial.
Let him whistle a shrill dirge
Or laugh enragedly.
The intuition that his line

Shall have no furtherance this spring
Has embittered him.
To be and to cause to be
Rotunds the circle of existence,
But by a betraying trick of nature
His geometry is incomplete.
Ah, ha ! to live a distorted semi-circle.

TAUNT TO THE EGOIST

Fan your tail to the silver twilight.
Gorge in pomp, my dove.
As for myself,
I shall disrobe
To grovel in the ashes.
How adorable is my humility,
So utter in its simplicity,
Surely wrought
As small ivory in Chinese hands.
Green and gold
And the changing rays of purple
Pulsate in your plumage, my dove.
Strut ! Show the world your splendour.
As for myself,
I take great pride
In knowing that my plainness conceals me.
Someday the pod of me shall burst,
Then you will see
How fertile are the meek and humble.

SUPERWOMAN

She lives at least by God, she lives at least, she has experience, goes out and has experience, she lives, she doesn't have ideas about life, she lives. She is high tension

—as is many a highstrung race horse that breaks and loses every race so insensitive is he to experience—

—she would smash carved ivory lovers—passion utilized is not to her passion—

—but everything interesting as a spectacle does not inspire intimacy—

—she will have what she will have, wills to with all her sensual, mercenary and physical impulses—

—and cannot understand that such will is mere adding of lusts to mind without discrimination so that actual will does not enter into the discussion—

—there is nothing pathologic about her—a definite awareness of her desires and insensitivity to all but ultras—

—with mawkish sentimentality where unconquered language is not a barrier that lends strained force—

—and a quite ordinary inward rage at restrictive natural forces—economic, social, and sensibilities that are barriers—

—like all imperialists unaware that aggression is the insistence of the lower organisms—

—she would gasp at the thought that energy is not most forceful when visibly in action ; that experience does not require muscular movement ;—that strength consists in using the situation about you rather than in searching world's end for situations you can enjoy.

THE NEW CRUSADERS

A quite patent opportunism

Has invoked the parenthood of skyscrapers.

Some call their children bird-witted,

For the way they swarm around a popular idea.

Scoffers, however, seldom understand completely.

Nature must desire them vastly,
For they continue as inevitably as time,
In numbers vaster than men count.

The others, who scoff,
Or who are wounded lightly,
With deep wounds—
Sometimes it is as though life itself
Turned upon them with yellow vicious teeth bared,
Like a cornered musk-rat—
The scoffers and the sufferers
Do not so well survive the years.
The fashion of a newer fancy causes them to fall,
As a lamb from the talons of an eagle
Which sees its nest assailed.

These new crusaders are dogged,
As they bear down upon the skyscrapers,
With the accoutrements of their clerkly lives upon them.
They are faithful, in a manner,
Working with almost symphonic accord
Toward the end of happiness,
Forgetting, if they have known,
The knowledge of self-deficiency.

Some dash more boldly than the rest
To the altar of haberdashery refinement.
Some know famous dancers,
Others know actors or even statesmen.
But there is warmth in the hearts of all
For citizens they know who are "of means."

O, they are not the scrape-pennies of the land.
They spend lavishly, when they have to spend.

And in them is a very real sympathy
For those who cannot find themselves

Adjusted to the guidance of the skyscrapers.
It is disastrous for an ordinary man
Always to seek something beyond the comforts of life.
When the tag end of life looms up
And even it is frayed with yearning
There is great need for sympathy.
In each of the children is a will,
Even beyond the hunger of their mouths and other gross
 hungers
Are other desires, tangled like stray silk threads
In the cotton weave of their lives.
As the reverberation of applause
Which persists long after a singer has left the stage
Impulses continually draw them from behind the scenes.
So—existence is ever restricted somehow.
The skyscrapers
Having so much effort to be high
Can scarce waste effort in striving for the higher.
How, then, may their children ?
The clerical procession straggles on,
To some holy land you may be sure.
There are those who scoff,
But scoffers seldom understand.

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